

Books in the Afternoon Book Selections 2014-2015

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Thursday, October 30, 2014

HELP FOR THE HAUNTED, John Searles

John Searles's *Help for the Haunted* is an unforgettable story of a most unusual family, their deep secrets, their harrowing tragedy, and ultimately, a daughter's discovery of a dark and unexpected mystery.

Thursday, November 20, 2014

EVENTIDE, Kent Haruf

Kent Haruf, award-winning, bestselling author of *Plainsong* returns to the high-plains town of Holt, Colorado, with a novel of masterful authority. The aging McPherson brothers are learning to live without Victoria Roubideaux, the single mother they took in and who has now left their ranch to start college. A lonely young boy stoically cares for his grandfather while a disabled couple tries to protect their a violent relative. As these lives unfold and intersect, *Eventide* unveils the immemorial truths about human beings: their fragility and resilience, their selfishness and goodness, and their ability to find family in one another.

Thursday, December 18, 2014

WISHIN' AND HOPIN', Wally Lamb

In Wally Lamb's pitch perfect new novel, it is 1964. LBJ and Lady Bird are in the White House, **Meet the Beatles** is on everyone's turntable, and ten-year-old Felix Funicello (distant cousin of the iconic Annette!) is doing his best to navigate fifth grade—easier said than done when scary movies still give you nightmares and you bear a striking resemblance to a certain adorable cartoon boy. But there are several things young Felix can depend on: the birds and bees are puzzling, television is magical, and this is one Christmas he's never going to forget.

Thursday, January 29, 2015

BURIAL RITES, Hannah Kent

Exploring the final months of an Icelandic maid charged with murder and condemned to execution in 1829 is hardly a reader-friendly subject for a novel. But in her mesmerizing debut, Hannah Kent offers a retelling of actual historical events that makes it impossible not to become invested in understanding the guilt--or innocence--of Agnes Magnúsdóttir, the last person to be executed in Iceland. Kent seamlessly shifts between historical documents and different characters' perspectives with a lyricism that makes every tortured thought

and charged interaction echo in the silence of Iceland's stark landscape. As details of Agnes's involvement in the crime come to light, this thoroughly researched debut novel asks us to examine the significance of stories--both the ones that others tell about us and the ones that we tell about ourselves--ultimately offering Agnes a chance at a more compassionate story than the one history has given her.

Thursday, February 27, 2014

ME BEFORE YOU, JoJo Moyes

Before Louisa met Will, her plans didn't reach beyond their tiny English town. Will, when he wasn't closing multimillion-dollar deals, blew off steam scaling mountains, leaping from planes, and enjoying exquisite women--until an accident left him paralyzed and seriously depressed. When his mother hires Lou to keep his spirits up, he meets her awkward overtures with caustic contempt, but she's tenacious and oddly endearing. Their fondness grows into something deeper, gaining urgency when she realizes his determination to end his life, and her efforts to convince him of its value throw her own bland ambitions into question. Plumbing morally complex depths with comedy and compassion, JoJo Moyes elevates the story of Lou and Will from what could have been a maudlin weepie into a tragic love story, with a catharsis that will wring out your heart and leave you feeling fearless.

Thursday, March 26, 2015

FOLLOWING ATTICUS, Tom Ryan

Following Atticus is the remarkable true story of a man and a dog embarking on the challenge of a lifetime. This is author Tom Ryan's inspiring tale of how he and his miniature schnauzer companion, the "Little Buddha" Atticus M. Finch, attempted to scale all forty-eight of New Hampshire's four thousand foot White Mountains twice in the dead of winter. It is a story of love, loss, and the resilience of the human and animal spirit that's as thrilling as *Into Thin Air* and featuring the most endearing and unforgettable canine protagonist since Marley and Me.

Thursday, April 30, 2015

SIGNATURE OF ALL THINGS, Elizabeth Gilbert

In *The Signature of All Things*, Elizabeth Gilbert returns to fiction, inserting her inimitable voice into an enthralling story of love, adventure and discovery. Spanning much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the novel follows the fortunes of the extraordinary Whittaker family as led by the enterprising Henry Whittaker—a poor-born Englishman who makes a great fortune in the South American quinine trade, eventually becoming the richest man in Philadelphia. Born in 1800, Henry's brilliant daughter, Alma (who inherits both her father's money and his mind), ultimately becomes a botanist of considerable gifts herself. As Alma's research takes her deeper into the mysteries of evolution, she falls in

love with a man named Ambrose Pike who makes incomparable paintings of orchids and who draws her in the exact opposite direction—into the realm of the spiritual, the divine, and the magical. Alma is a clear-minded scientist; Ambrose a utopian artist— but what unites this unlikely couple is a desperate need to understand the workings of this world and the mechanisms behind all life.

Thursday, May 28, 2015

I WAS TOLD THERE'D BE CAKE, Sloane Crosley

Crosley writes humorous essays in the newly named genre “creative nonfiction”—the stories are true, but they read like short stories. As a young woman living and working in New York City, she talks about her adventures at work, riding in taxi cabs, dating, and in the Museum of Natural History.

Thursday, June 26, 2015

PRODIGAL SUMMER, Barbara Kingsolver

Barbara Kingsolver's fifth novel is a hymn to wildness that celebrates the prodigal spirit of human nature, and of nature itself. It weaves together three stories of human love within a larger tapestry of lives amid the mountains and farms of southern Appalachia. Over the course of one humid summer, this novel's intriguing protagonists face disparate predicaments but find connections to one another and to the flora and fauna with which they necessarily share a place.

Prodigal Summer weaves together three stories of human love within a larger tapestry of lives in southern Appalachia. At the heart of these intertwined narratives is a den of coyotes that have recently migrated into the region.